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## THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

DELIVERED ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, IN CHICAGO, ILL.,  
AT THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
CENTRAL DIVISION OF THE ASSOCIATION.  
BY OLIVER FARRAR EMERSON.

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR AND THE MODERN  
LANGUAGES.<sup>1</sup>

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Tonight, the Modern Language Association of America rounds out a quarter century of active existence. Twenty-five years ago this holiday season its first meeting was called together in the city of New York. At that time forty instructors, representing twenty institutions of learning, gathered at Columbia College, as it then was, to consider their common interests in modern language instruction. It was a small beginning. No doubt there were some fears in the minds of the enterprising founders, as to the possible success of the undertaking. The few who had before taken an active share in associational interests had been a part of the American Philological Association, the main purpose of which was a study of the classical languages. There may well have been some doubts as to the practicability of an organization exclusively devoted to the modern tongues, at a time when they were so slightly regarded.

Yet a quarter century has amply justified the enterprise. Such a period, too, all but lost in the history of a nation, is

<sup>1</sup> The appearance in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, Beilage 63, of an article entitled *Die Wissenschaft in Amerika*, makes it proper for me to say that my subject was chosen and most of the address written before that article was published.

momentous in the life of an individual, or of such an organization as ours. It is the period of birth, of guiding uncertain steps, of early ripening through experience, of blossoming into full power and usefulness. Its history is particularly interesting and instructive. For this reason I trust it will not seem to you inappropriate that, at the close of this its first quarter century, we should look back on the course our organization has so far run, note its growth to maturity in time and purpose, congratulate ourselves on its achievements, and consider its present power and possibilities. Nor need we confine our backward look wholly to the Association itself. We may reasonably scan more widely the development of modern language instruction during this important period, and perhaps gain some inspiration for that future which tonight clasps hands with a not inglorious past.

The birth of the Modern Language Association was opportune. Early in the year 1883 it was conceived in the minds of a few fore-seeing teachers of modern languages. In those same months another American, eminent in public life, teacher also in the broader sense, was revolving a somewhat kindred conception, which was to add a new impulse to the study of the modern tongues. That eminent American, I need scarcely say, was Charles Francis Adams, and his thought developed into that still famous address, called *The College Fetish*. I need but recall it, to remind you of the wit, the brilliancy, the scathing yet honest arraignment of preparatory and college training, because they practically excluded the modern languages and the mother tongue, in favor of those which were no longer spoken, and no longer even read in the practical affairs of modern life. I need but recall to you the profound sensation caused by this indictment of classical usurpation. Nor need I add that, sensational as was the condemnation, it was made with a profound sense of its importance. It was an arraignment of classical

instruction in the house of its friends, but it was meant in a most friendly spirit. Its delivery was in public and on a notable occasion, only because private expostulation would have been worse than useless.

But it is not my purpose at present to consider this famous educational manifesto. I recall it to show that the time was ripe for the establishment of such an association as ours. Nor was this the only indication of similar opportuneness. The struggle between modern and classical culture was going on in Germany, and the educational institutions in which the modern languages had displaced Greek were gaining firmer and firmer foothold in the empire. In 1880, graduates of the Realschule were first permitted matriculation in the universities. A year before our Association was founded the Realschule of the better class were first given the title, Realgymnasia. While these were not great advances, they were some indication of better things to come. In England, also, the claims of modern language instruction were beginning to attract notice, if more slowly. To take one significant fact, two years after the Association was founded the movement had resulted in the establishment of a new professorship of English at Oxford and the appointment of Professor A. S. Napier, a man trained in the best modern methods. All these things emphasize that the time had come for a new step forward, a new organization to solidify the results so far obtained, to plan for further progress in the future.

The growth of the Association in the last quarter century has been its fullest justification. I mentioned that forty teachers gathered at the first meeting in New York, and this number may be assumed to represent the charter group. In ten years the membership of the body had increased more than ten-fold, or to 430 subscribers to our *Publications*. In the remaining fifteen years of existence, the list has con-

siderably more than doubled the record of the first decade. Nor is this all. For a little more than one decade, a single corporate body sufficed for the entire membership. Then, in the twelfth year of the parent Association, the vigorous young offshoot which you represent was firmly planted and began its sturdy growth. I need not remind you that your course was at first regarded with some fear. There were those who, jealous for all our best interests as I firmly believe, thought your desire for an Association nearer home might mean schism and possible discord. Traveling only up and down the Atlantic coast, they did not fully realize the magnificent distances of this Mesopotamia of our mighty land. Fortunately, all misunderstandings soon past away. You showed from the first that your aims were unselfish, your purposes in fullest sympathy with those of the parent body. From the first you have been a source of strength, never of weakness.

Yet the establishment and growth of the Modern Language Association is only one of many indications, that a new era in the study of the modern languages began some quarter of a century ago. What then have been the tangible results of this period of progress? I say tangible advisedly, for many of the subtler effects can never be adequately estimated. They belong to the inmost life of the subject. They are part of the fiber of teacher and pupil and have been wrought into the life tissue of our educational body. But results of the more tangible sort there are in abundance, and we may well review them, in order to strengthen our hands and invigorate our purposes.

In the first place, the period covered by the life of the Association is about commensurate with the more important development of graduate instruction in America. It is true that there were some graduate students in this country before the first meeting of this Association. But counting

all those who could in any way be regarded as in this class, the number in 1883 scarcely exceeded five hundred, or a little more than one for every college and university in the country.<sup>1</sup> It is also true that the Harvard graduate school was founded as early as 1870, but it was not until Johns Hopkins University was established in 1876 that graduate instruction in the fullest sense can be said to have taken a firm hold upon the country. Then, and then only, that farsighted educational leader who has this year past away gave to America the best results of university training abroad. Allowing some brief period for getting under way, the more significant work of Johns Hopkins University is almost a part of the period we review.

Before that time, owing to lack of opportunity in our own country, it was necessary for the student desiring broader training to spend some years in Europe, generally Germany. In 1880 there were 172 such Americans studying in that country. Foreign residence and study will always have its special value. America, too, will always recognize its debt to what is educationally the great Teutonic fatherland. Yet it was manifestly impossible that the majority of those desiring graduate training should be able to obtain it in a foreign land, and manifestly important that such instruction should be made freely accessible near at home. Just that has happened in the lifetime of this Association. After the founding of John Hopkins, graduate schools sprang up in all our best universities. The result has been an extraordinary growth in this branch of university culture. It is true

<sup>1</sup> See the *Report of the Commissioner of Education* for 1882-83. In his Commemorative Address published in *Science*, xv, 330 f. (1902), President Ira Remsen of Johns Hopkins University stated that in 1850 there were eight graduate students in the United States. Of these three were at Harvard, three at Yale, one at the University of Virginia, and one at Trinity College. In 1875 the number had increased to 399.

some American graduates still study abroad, but the number at present is probably not over 500, or about three times what it was a quarter century ago.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the number of graduate students in America has increased to nearly, if not quite, eight thousand, or fifteen times as many as when our Association came into existence.

It is needless to say that the development of graduate instruction has been of incalculable advantage to the whole teaching profession. It is equally needless to emphasize that in this advantage the modern languages have more than fairly shared. I know that the kind of instruction given in our graduate schools is sometimes criticised. Let us grant that it may be improved, but let us also be optimistic enough to believe that it will improve. The criticism that implies all is wrong is surely captious and caviling. Nor have I seen many practical hints of what should replace the excellent courses which now instruct and train in a methodical and helpful manner. It may be that the graduate schools do not attract the creative geniuses, but I can hardly believe they have deprived us of many such by permanently dampening their ardor, or blighting their budding powers. It is a grave question whether the seemingly serious criticism of present graduate courses does not primarily rest on the student's unwillingness to prepare himself broadly for the field of knowledge which should be made his own. If such be the case, the rising generation of graduate students may be warned that there is more danger of specializing in superficiality, than from intensive study.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the *Report of the Commissioner of Education* for 1906-7, the last available. It is there stated that there were, in that year, 309 American graduate students in Germany, tho it is suggested that the number may be too small. Of course only graduate students in university work are here included. Of other students pursuing various kinds of study abroad the number is much larger.

Seriously, there will always be room for all kinds of good teaching in graduate schools. There is no real conflict between good teaching in different fields of a broad subject. Nor should one kind of good teaching exclude the other. The highest ideal of the teacher is well-rounded development. But the necessary corollary to such a proposition is, that well-rounded development always means some training on the weaker side. In our special fields of learning there is nothing more important for the literary critic than some fundamental conception of language, and of the growth and development of that greatest medium of artistic expression. It is equally true that the philologist in the narrower sense needs the inspiring and broadening acquaintance with the artistic side of literature.

Side by side with the growth of the graduate school, another evidence of great progress in modern language scholarship in America during the last twenty-five years is the development of the spirit of investigation. Such a spirit, it is true, possessed the whole nineteenth century. Witness the splendid results from the questioning of nature in all her various phases. Witness the abundant harvests from archeological research and the delving into historical sources of all sorts. Nor was the spirit unknown in our own fields of language and literature. It produced the epoch-making *Deutsche Grammatik* of Grimm as early as 1819, and the equally important *Grammatik der romanischen Sprachen* of Diez in 1836 to 1842. In our own country, Professor F. J. Child of Harvard had printed his first edition of the *Ballads* in the late fifties, and his important study of the language of Chaucer in 1862. In 1870, also, Professor Francis A. March had issued his *Comparative Grammar of the Anglo-Saxon Language*. Nor must we omit the stimulus to research given by the American Philological Association, founded in 1868.



Notwithstanding these facts, however, a new and much wider impulse toward investigation came with the establishment of graduate instruction in America, the influence of German training, and the founding of our Association as a medium for the interchange of ideas. Before that time it had usually been enough for a teacher to present the facts embodied in a text-book of the subject. He usually made little attempt to keep up with the latest results of research. Many of these results he did not appreciate, or know how to apply. Not an investigator himself, he could scarcely correlate the new knowledge with that which he had come to regard as fixed and unchangeable. All this was radically altered by the new investigatory spirit. Those training in the graduate school there learned what research really meant, and how it could be applied in their several fields. The teacher became an investigator as well, and thus added to his function of imparting knowledge that of extending the boundaries of what is known.

The spirit of investigation, it may be pointed out, has exhibited itself in two somewhat different fields. In the one, it shows closest kinship with the spirit of the modern scientist. The latter broadens the field of knowledge by asking, not what has been, but what is. He gets little direct assistance from previous or speculative conceptions. He puts his questions directly to Nature and compels her to speak. Such investigation of what is, has been opened anew to the modern language scholar in the last quarter century. You will remember the *Junggrammatiker* asserted, that we are not ready for questions of the origin of language until we know more of the essential characteristics of speech itself. So began the science of phonetics, with its body of more precise knowledge of speech sounds. So came a truer philosophy of language, and of its growth and development.

Nor are all such problems yet solved. The physiology of

speech sounds, it is true, has been about exhausted. But the physicist tells us that sound has received less attention than any other of the greater phenomena of nature. There is still room for the physical investigation of speech sounds, and such investigation awaits the trained linguist who is also fully equipped on the side of physics.

Again the broad field of present usage in language is open to further scientific research. To instance one portion of this broad field, the practical teaching of English expression has made vast strides in our time. On the other hand, rhetorical theory has scarcely advanced beyond its presentation in the eighteenth century. It is still a catalog of 'thou shalt not's'; a decalog multiplied by hundreds. Why may it not become a series of positive doctrines, based upon closer and keener observation of the art of expression? I cite such specific examples only to show that the end of this sort of research has by no means come. We might all add many other fields which the individual student, no matter how situated, may cultivate in a profitable manner.

The spirit of investigation has also exhibited itself in what we may call the development of the historic sense. This sense asks not what is, but how and from what something has come to be. It delves into analogues, parallels, sources, originals, in order to explain the growth and development of some great work. It asks what were the influences under which a masterpiece was composed, what previous works had bearing upon it, what materials were used by the new writer. The result of such studies has been a flood of light upon problems of literary development, and especially a new conception of originality. We now appreciate, as never before, the dependence of one man of genius upon another, of one age upon the many ages that had preceded.

No one estimates more highly than I the value of such

study of sources and origins. No one of us would stay such investigations. Upon them we are all dependent, and for them correspondingly grateful. But it is still right to point out the extremes to be avoided even when one is guided by the historic sense. Let every fact be gathered with the most diligent care, and every parallel be searched with the most minute exactness. But let it also be remembered that the crucial test of the investigation is in the management of material and in the inferences drawn. Inductive reasoning is based upon the gathering of examples, something of which may be done by the ordinary mind. The power of making correct inferences springs from a mental grasp amounting almost to genius. The great number of new facts regarding Chaucer's life and works discovered in the last few years are of the greatest value. Some considerable number of the inferences from these facts can not possibly be true. They are at variance with each other, positively contradictory, or at most only as plausible as some other conclusions. In general, little time should be wasted on an inference that is at best only plausible.

Another phase of the study of origins may also be carried too far. Ever since Wolf propounded his theory of the Homeric poems, it has been a favorite pastime of the separatist to assume the composite character of some famous work, and assign its parts with great apparent exactness to the somewhat indefinite A, B, or C. No one would deny that Wolf's theory has been of material advantage to modern scholarship. That such a theory may be true of some works is amply illustrated by the growth, in historic times, of the Arthur legend. Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, for example, or Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* based upon it, is a union of the originally separate Arthur, Merlin, Launcelot, Tristan, and Holy Grail stories. But the separatist is not always so fortunate in his problem, or may think he sees a

problem were none exists. It is almost pathetic to consider the time and patience spent on mistaken conceptions of our early epic *Beowulf*. One is reminded of the great classical scholar Bentley, who set up his theory of an imperfect Milton text, and then amended the assumed scribal errors as in the case of an imperfect classical manuscript. It is to be hoped that the saneness of American scholarship will not often be led so far astray.<sup>1</sup>

All such problems of origins rest on the far greater one of personality. So long as we have not read that riddle more profoundly, it will be impossible to determine from merely internal evidence what may or may not have been written by a single person, at different times, or in different moods. It may be suggested therefore, that while many more definite subjects need the acumen of the scholar, the investigator may well avoid the subtler depths that may never be satisfactorily fathomed.

Still, in spite of such criticism, which is meant to be suggestive of the future rather than proscriptive of the past, there are ample evidences that the American scholar, during the last quarter century, has learned to investigate as well as instruct. The number of significant studies of this sort has greatly increased, and in general their methods have been sound and their conclusions sane. Many important results of these labors are quite as necessary to us all, as the labors and researches of our foreign colleagues.

A third significant sign of progress in modern language study in America is the increase in publications dealing with the subject. When the Modern Language Association was founded, no publication in any English speaking country

<sup>1</sup>It is right to say that these strictures have in no sense been suggested by the new question of the authorship of *Piers Plowman*. On that question it is too early to form an opinion. Yet the attitude of skepticism toward the separatist doctrine, seems to me the soundest until the proof is unmistakable.

was exclusively devoted to the study of the modern tongues. Before that time studies in these subjects sought publication in various places. When Professor Child prepared his study of the language of Chaucer in 1862 he found a place for it in the *Proceedings of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences*. After 1868 American scholars might print in the *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, and after 1880, three years before our Association was founded, in the *American Journal of Philology*. British scholars had, in their own country, but one opportunity for more than short papers, that of the *Proceedings of the Philological Society*, founded in 1842. Germany, of course, was better provided with scholarly journals. The *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen* had been established in 1846, and *Germania* ten years later. The decade, or a little more, before our Association came into existence had been prolific of German periodicals. The *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie* dates from 1869, Paul and Braune's *Beiträge* from 1875. Then came the *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie* and *Englische Studien* in 1877, *Anglia* in 1878, and the *Zeitschrift für Neufranzösische Sprache* in 1879. In 1870, also, the French added to their older periodicals the *Revue des Langues Romanes*, and in 1872 *Romania*.

Yet none of these furnished a natural medium for American scholarship. In all the years preceding the founding of this Association there were, in these foreign periodicals, scarcely a half-dozen articles by Americans.<sup>1</sup> All these were

<sup>1</sup> These modern language pioneers in publishing abroad may be worth noting especially. In the first volume of *Englische Studien* Professor F. A. March had an article, *Is there an Anglo-Saxon Language?* The remaining articles are all in *Anglia* and include, *Philip Massinger* by James Phelan, vol. I, i; *Chaucer's influence upon James I of Scotland* by Henry Wood, II, 223; *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* by W. M. Baskervill, IV, 139; *The Sources of Tindale's New Testament* by J. L. Cheney, VI, 277. The dissertation of George E. MacLean, *Ælfric's Version of Alcuin's Interrogationes Sigewulfi in Genesis*, was also begun in this same volume.

in the newly established *Anglia* and *Englische Studien*, and most of them were the dissertations of young Americans who had been studying in Germany. Even the *Transactions of the American Philological Association* were not largely utilized by modern language scholars. That publication contained but twenty-five such articles in the sixteen years to the close of 1883. The *American Journal of Philology*, founded after graduate instruction was fully established, attracted a somewhat larger number of contributors. Some eighteen articles on modern language subjects appeared in that periodical, during the four years before the founding of our Society.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the state of affairs when the *Publications* of this Association first offered their opportunity to modern language scholars. That the opportunity has been fully appreciated the twenty-three stately volumes fully testify. As they stand on the library shelves, beside publications of other kinds or other countries, they make their own mute but effective appeal. It would not be possible to deny that occasionally a less important, even a somewhat unimportant, article has been printed. But it will be equally admitted that the succeeding volumes contain some of the most scholarly work published in America. There have been, besides, increasing originality, increasing grasp of detail, increasing power in dealing with serious problems.

In one respect the *Publications* of the Association show a striking change as the years have gone by. The early numbers contain a much larger proportion of articles on methods of teaching. The importance of such articles I by no means underestimate. Indeed, I have long thought that the college instructor lags behind in methods of presentation. Yet the exclusive devotion of such an Association as

<sup>1</sup> I include here articles rather than notes. On the other hand many of the articles are short and would often be considered as notes, rather than considerable studies.

this to questions of pedagogy would be manifestly improper. It is reason for congratulation, therefore, that the later volumes of the *Publications* have been given over more largely to advancing our knowledge in hitherto unexplored fields.

Moreover our *Publications* were only the beginning of opportunity for the appearance of scholarly work in this country. Two years after the Association's first meeting, *Modern Language Notes* was founded, the first number appearing in 1886. Its appearance month by month during the academic year, and its reception of both short and long articles, have admirably fitted it to be our most convenient means of communication with each other. Three years more and, in its narrower field, the Dialect Society began the issue of *Dialect Notes*. If apology seems necessary for including a publication of such meager output, I may remind you of its meager annual subscription, and the small number of workers in what is really a deserving field. The purpose of its founders was broad enough, for it was intended to include all phases of dialectal study. While dealing mainly with English, as was natural, the *Notes* have included occasional articles on French and Spanish, as well as exceptionally good ones on the Scandinavian languages in America.

A further advance in periodical publications was next made by our greatly lamented friend, the chairman whom I have the honor to succeed, when he established the *Journal of Germanic Philology* in 1897. Nor is it too much to say that, considering the high ideals of the founder and the personal sacrifices he so bravely made, the *Journal of Germanic Philology* set the high-water mark in this country for individual endeavor in modern language scholarship. Six years later, in 1903, the last of our great periodicals began in the splendid numbers of *Modern Philology*. Including the *Publications* of the Association, virtually a quarterly for

many years, the last quarter century has seen the establishment of four periodicals of first class importance, now, if not always, equal to the best publications abroad. Besides, the numbers of such periodicals might be still increased, if we included those devoted to a single field of modern language instruction.<sup>1</sup>

Nor are these more regular issues America's only contributions of general periodical nature. The quarter century has been especially prolific of semi-periodical publications by different educational institutions. Time would fail me if I attempted to include all these, and I may now remind you only of some of the more important. The Association had been founded only four years when in 1887 and 1888 Professors Stoddard and Cook used the *Library Studies* of the University of California for excellent monographs on English subjects. In the latter year *University Studies* were also issued by the University of Nebraska, while in 1891 began the important *Publications of the University of Pennsylvania*. The next year, 1892, the extremely valuable *Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* were first issued at Harvard. In 1898 came the *Yale Studies in English*, now reaching to some thirty-odd numbers, and the Wisconsin *University Studies in Philology and Literature*. Similar *Studies* have also been issued at other institutions in this great central west, as those of the University of Illinois in 1900, the University of Missouri in 1901, the University of Iowa in 1907. As I said at the beginning I make no pretence at a complete list of these *Studies*, and your memories will doubtless supply a number of others, some of which are quite as valuable as those I have mentioned. All

<sup>1</sup> I may note especially the *German American Annals*, earlier the *Americana Germanica* of Professor Learned, and the more recently established *Monatshefte*, earlier *Pädagogische Monatshefte*, one part of which is edited by Professor Roedder of the University of Wisconsin.



are important as evidence of a new spirit of scholarly production, and many of them are indispensable.<sup>1</sup>

In connection with these publications, another class of writings shows noteworthy progress during the last twenty-five years. Text-books do not always represent the highest kind of scholarly production. But however lightly we may regard them, each quarter century and each generation must have its new series of such books, or the schools stand still. Either new material needs presentation, or new methods of presentation deserve recognition. A quarter century ago, in most of the modern languages, the text-books were largely of foreign origin, or directly based upon those prepared abroad. During the period we survey this has been almost completely reversed. Modern language text-books have been more and more largely prepared in this country, while the best of ours are not unknown in actual use abroad. We may reasonably assume that, while monographs of special excellence will always be sought out, no matter where produced, American schools will never again be dependent upon foreigners for well-edited texts and proper introductory books of all sorts.

<sup>1</sup>In Mr. J. D. Thompson's *Handbook of Learned Societies and Institutions* (Publications of the Carnegie Institution, 1908) the following are given in addition to those mentioned above: *Radcliffe College Monographs*, (first in modern languages), 1891; *Kansas University Quarterly*, 1893; *Western Reserve University Bulletin*, 1895; *University of Virginia Monographs*, *School of Teutonic Languages*, later *University of Virginia Studies in the Teutonic Languages*, 1899; *Columbia University Studies in English*, *Columbia University Studies in Literature*, and the *University of Cincinnati Bulletin*, 1900; *Yale Bicentennial Publications*, *Columbia University Germanic Studies*, 1901; *Columbia University Studies in Comparative Literature*, and *Studies in Romance Philology and Literature*, 1902; *University of Chicago Decennial Publications*, *Colorado College Studies in Language and Literature*, and *University of Texas Humanistic Series*, 1904; *University of Cincinnati Studies*, (superseding the *Bulletin* above), 1905; *University of North Carolina Studies in Philology*, 1906; *University of Pennsylvania Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures*, 1907.

In only one respect, perhaps, does this subject of text-books suggests a note of warning. While it is highly important that the schools should have books prepared by the best minds, there is danger that the alluring rewards for popular text-books may dampen our ardor for the higher learning, and even weaken our perception of what ought to be included in them. It is surely not too much to say, that the American scholar of high purposes may well beware of attempting any book to which he is not called with some higher aim than mere commercial success.

Again, the quarter century just past has seen a marvelous advance in the building of scholarly libraries, and the material increase in resources of those already in existence. The period has been one of library building in every respect, but I do not now consider the great number of public libraries established. Excellent as they are, they are of comparatively little assistance to the modern scholar. I therefore refer to a parallel development of far greater importance to us. When the Association was founded, there were few great collections on the modern languages, even in the university libraries.<sup>1</sup> Harvard had one such, a collection of folk-lore and medieval romances gathered under the direction of Professor Child, and supposed to be the largest in existence. Perhaps we should add the George P. Marsh library at the University of Vermont, one strong in Italian and the Scandinavian languages. No other great collections are recorded as antedating 1883. The next year, however, Professor Charles Eliot Norton gave his Dante collection to Harvard College, and Senator Anthony of Rhode Island bequeathed to Brown University the Harris collection of American poetry. These were all libraries gathered by

<sup>1</sup> The facts here given are on the basis of Lane and Bolton's *Notes on Special Collections in American Libraries*, 1892, in *Bibliographical Contributions of Harvard University Library*, edited by Justin Winsor, No. 45.

Americans. A new step was taken when the splendid library of Wilhelm Scherer was purchased by Western Reserve University in 1887. In 1893 the Zarncke library was similarly acquired by Cornell University, and during the same year that institution began receiving the first instalments of the magnificent Dante collection, which has since been completed. About the same time the libraries of Leland Stanford and Chicago Universities were gathered with astonishing rapidity, the latter institution buying sixty thousand volumes from a single source.

Nor are such collections,—and I have by no means mentioned all,—the only evidence, or perhaps the best evidence, of the great increase of libraries for the scholar. A quarter century ago college libraries, especially of the middle west, were largely haphazard collections, made up of gifts from men who had purchased with little method, and seldom with a knowledge of the best books. Indeed the books of fundamental importance were often lamentably lacking. This was especially true of modern language collections. In the last quarter century, however, the buying of books has been put on a methodical basis, by men who have known exactly what was best in their particular fields, who have been far-sighted in filling the important gaps in their subject matter, who have been willing to work unweariedly for years with a definite purpose toward a definite end. Such men have been emphasizing from the beginning the difference between books of fundamental value, books which never grow old because they are always new and necessary to each generation, and books of superficial and temporary importance. In this way the college and university libraries over the whole country have been vastly strengthened in the best things. While there would be little boasting of special collections, as these are necessarily limited, the number of libraries adequately equipped for scholarly study has been vastly

increased in all parts of our country. There is little reason now, why any man of high purpose may not carry on some valuable investigation in almost any place in which his work may fall.

With a continuation of such progress it will soon be true that few libraries abroad will rival the collections to be found somewhere in our own land. Nor are such collections inaccessible because not found in one or two places. Another excellent feature of library development has been the progress in library comity. It is almost as easy to draw upon the large collections, and even the extremely valuable books in any part of our country, as to obtain the treasures of many a foreign library after you have ended your thousands of miles of travel and stand before the librarian's desk. In only one important particular do the foreign libraries still inevitably excel, that is in their priceless manuscripts. Yet even in this we see our way to gaining easy access to their wealth, without plundering them of their coveted treasures. The sunlight shows no diminution of brightness, because in these later centuries it floods a new world as well as the old. And so, pressing the sunlight into our service, we propose to bring from the old world the inexpensive but equally good photographic copies of manuscripts that could never be ours by purchase. This Association, and the Central Division especially, is to be congratulated on the movement for manuscript reproduction begun last year. Nor is it too much to hope that you and I will live to see, perhaps by some still cheaper method, the friendly rifling of all those manuscript possessions which are the unique pride of the old world.

A last and greatest evidence of progress in the modern languages is the altered position which they now hold in institutions of all ranks, as compared with their position twenty-five years ago. To emphasize that altered position,

let us return for a moment to the address of Charles Francis Adams. That address excited great controversy. That the long entrenched classical instruction should be called by such an opprobrious name as the college fetich, aroused the supporters of the classics, especially Greek, almost to fury. We can now see that, as in many literary quarrels, the controversialists mist the main point. As most of us today, Mr. Adams was quite willing to admit the value of classical studies for certain people. He was willing to grant that some Latin was worth while for all liberally educated men. But in addition, he made this modest plea for the modern tongues :

“So far from demanding that Greek and Latin be driven out, and French and German substituted for them, we do not even ask that the modern languages be put on an even footing with the classics . . . We are willing,—at least I am willing,—to concede a preference, and a great preference, to the dead over the living, to the classic over the modern. All I would ask would be, that the preference afforded to the one should no longer, as now, amount to practical prohibition of the other.”<sup>1</sup>

With this modest proposal of 1883, so modest that we can hardly understand its exciting so considerable a storm of controversy, compare the actual status of the modern languages in all grades of instruction today. What more striking evidence of the revolution that has taken place in a quarter of a century ! French and German have been placed on a footing of absolute equality with Greek in the college entrance requirements, while many institutions give them equality with Latin in whole or in part. The mother tongue, which was formerly relegated to an obscure corner

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in *Three Phi Beta Kappa Addresses*, (1907) pp. 39–40.

of the entrance examinations, now counts for its full quota of required units. In college and university training, all modern languages rank with the classics in degree-advancing power.

Indeed, the change is much more sweeping than these statements imply. From a position of required subjects for the whole body of students, thru at least <sup>two</sup><sub>two</sub> years of the college curriculum, the classics are largely or wholly elective, and attract few more students than those who wish special study in them for some specific purpose. In fact the number of students is so small that the time may not be far distant when, in the smaller institutions at <sup>least</sup><sub>least</sub>, both subjects will be taught by a single instructor, as twenty-five years ago French and German were often taught by one individual. Besides, from being a required subject for entrance to college, Greek is becoming a beginner's subject in college. Nor is it impossible that, in the next few years, the same may come to be true of Latin. When not offered for entrance, opportunity may perhaps be given by which it may be begun and carried on during the collegiate years. Such a condition, by no means to be deplored, might be of real service in reclaiming some portion of the lost ground for this more important of the two classical languages.

This revolution in the position of the classics is perhaps not to be regarded on our part with unmingled feelings of exultation. It may be that the pendulum has swung too far. I am still old-fashioned enough to believe profoundly in the training of the classical laboratory, where the apparatus is a text and a dictionary, and the experiments are made by the teacher on the pupil. That is a far more effective kind of experimentation, I am sure, than the lecture system, unaccompanied by the most exacting tests of the individual. I still believe in the value of a reading knowledge of Latin, tho I care less today whether the text be that of Vergil or

Claudian, Cicero or Boëthius or a medieval monk. Probably we are all much more in sympathy with the proper study of the classics than the exponents of those subjects seem to think. Yet however we may agree or differ on this point, we are agreed in our profound appreciation of the new position to which the modern languages have attained, a position from which they will probably never be displaced. The American scholar in these subjects has come into his own.

But it is not enough to remind you of the growth of the Association ; the fuller development of graduate instruction in America ; the results of the new impulse toward investigation ; the multiplication of important publications ; the building of scholarly libraries ; the greatly enhanced position of the modern languages. For all such evidences of progress we are, and should be, profoundly grateful. Yet it is still the part of wisdom to remember that opportunity means responsibility. It may still be wise to inquire whether these evidences of progress present the whole story of educational advancement in the modern tongues. Progress is sometimes so rapid as to weaken vital forces. Has it been so in any sense with modern language development in America ? Have other influences militated against the fullest advancement in our fields ?

In considering such questions let me say at once that I assume no right to do more than suggest the grave, side by side with the more hopeful, view. I rest solely in the right of any one of us to examine himself or his calling, and take critical account of all present conditions. If such examination is not wholly agreeable in an individual case, let me assure you that it is not for its pleasure that I have undertaken it in this public way. Still, all will agree that it is better for us to examine ourselves than to be first portrayed by the hostile critic.

The extraordinary revolution, by which the modern languages have come to equality with the classics, may well suggest the question whether at present they fully deserve that position. Logically they must be said to have that desert, on the theory so common today, that every subject is the equal of every other. Yet, I take it, all of us have some lurking suspicion of such logic. It reminds us too much, perhaps, of the logic of the "one-hoss shay." We have all of us doubtless felt, at times, that the modern languages do not, in all respects, take the place of the classics they have so largely displaced. There is a certain fineness of quality about the best classical training not always reached by our modern language teaching. This may not be wholly our fault. The conditions may not be the same as those under which successful classical instruction has been carried on.

For one thing it must be admitted, I think, that we do not receive the same class of students as those who have usually given their attention to Latin and Greek. They do not, as a whole, represent the same seriousness of purpose, or the same mental fiber. This is due to many causes. The classical tongues, entrenched for centuries in scholastic curricula, had attracted a clientele which was recruited generation after generation from the same or similar sources. Those who choose Latin and Greek in college have been brought up to appreciate their importance, and have already entered upon their serious study in the lower schools. But even today, the modern languages can scarcely be said to have a large following of those who study them because of their necessity to the highest culture. Nor does the great literature of the mother tongue attract a large number who regard it as vital to the education of a cultured man or woman. Too large a number think some slight knowledge of the modern languages may be useful, tho in no sense essential.



Besides, students do not usually study the modern languages of Europe for that serious practical value which a speaking knowledge of them can have. It is true, courses in Spanish have been somewhat increased by the acquisition of our new dependencies. Yet even this has not materially altered our pride in knowing but one language, and that,—if the truth must be spoken for our college bred men,—none too thoroly. Our travelers, even our educated ones, give but a halting account of themselves on foreign soil. If they do not depend on a courier, after the older fashion described in Ruskin's *Præterita*, they can scarcely glory in their command of foreign tongues. Moreover, it is an oft repeated complaint, how largely our public service abroad suffers from a lack of intimate knowledge of foreign languages.

Again, too, our classes are overstocked, to say the least, with those who choose our work as the lesser of two evils. Some language and literature must be read they say, I can not think, reason. They will have none of the hated classics. A little German or French, a little English must be taken, and they will not perhaps too much interfere with the more serious business of athletics, the rushes and the rushing, the many social pleasures, and a good time generally.

I mention these things in no deeply pessimistic spirit. There is much ground for hope. We are not the only ones to suffer from lack of seriousness in the student body. It is characteristic of the times. But there are unmistakable signs of reaction. We may all live to see the day when the professional coach is not the best paid man on the faculty, the only man of *faculty* in the estimation of a large number of college men; when good healthy exercise of something besides the lungs will be a pleasure to all students; when there will be less appropriateness to a student contest in that passage of the psalmist which reads,

Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone,  
Thou hast broken out the teeth of the ungodly :

when college sport and the college "sport" shall give way to gentlemanly, if still strenuous, recreation; and when the college man shall again return to feast with delight upon "the dainties that are bred in a book."

A more serious change in our student following has resulted from other factors. The college and university are no longer in the main the training schools for the learned professions. The church no longer attracts a significant percentage of college men. Teaching, while presenting to the scholar far greater opportunities than formerly, can not begin to compete with the more lucrative callings. The law no longer holds out as its highest reward a place on the bench, but rather the position of guide and adviser to a business corporation. Neither law nor medicine, tho gaining immensely on the side of professional training, have yet been able to insist on the broader general foundation before professional training begins. Service of the state, except in the most limited fields, has never been entered thru the door of collegiate preparation. Finally, technical training, excellent as it is in its proper place, has so encroached upon our colleges and universities as seriously to militate against culture, even in the college community. The combined results of these factors is that the proportion of students loving learning for its own sake, earnestly seeking mental power, is almost swamped by the number of those whose ultimate aim is trade in some of its many enticing forms.

Yet, as teachers of the modern languages, we are not absolved from our duty by conditions that seem not wholly in our favor. We must still seek to exalt our subjects to equality with the old classical curriculum; to train up a clientele that chooses the modern tongues with a new seriousness, and applies to them the best powers of the young mind; to present with such persuasiveness the noble literatures of the greater modern nations, that they shall come to seem a necessary part of high culture.

Next to lack of seriousness and homogeneity in our student following must be placed, it seems to me, the less exacting, less studiously thoro, less critical teaching of the modern tongues. To this criticism it is some answer that the difference is in the modern languages themselves. Doubtless if we knew the classical languages in their spoken forms, we should find them as lacking in fixity and precision as their modern relatives. But we do not know them so, or we teach them to beginners at least, only in the more definite forms of great monuments, and those of a particular age. Besides, the classical tongues are so far removed from us that the pupil gets little help from a knowledge of his own language. They can be learned, therefore, only by an exacting amount of time and energy. But in the teaching of the modern tongues, if the problem is greater, the effort must be correspondingly greater to produce an equal effect. This, it seems to me, we should apprehend more fully than we have sometimes done, and make renewed efforts toward more methodical and exacting teaching.

One other factor in modern language teaching should be mentioned, tho it probably applies more fully to English in our colleges and universities than to any other tongue. I have already emphasized my belief in that special training of teachers which has so advanced during the last twenty-five years. Yet it is a serious question whether the results of that specialization have not been carried too far into the undergraduate curriculum. The unusual breadth of the English field has led to a corresponding specialization on the part of teachers. Such specialization has naturally suggested courses in special subjects, and these have greatly increased in recent years. The result has been, especially in our larger institutions, a breaking up of the subject into a great number of subdivisions. So many are there sometimes, that a student might take one or even two such subjects

thru several terms of his course, and yet get no connected idea of the literature of his mother tongue.

If we examine the reasons for this state of affairs, I believe we must see in them a sacrifice of the student's good to the pleasure of the instructor. The latter, in his fondness for specialization, offers the course in which he has specialized, or in which he wishes to carry on special study. He has no intention of sacrificieng his students, and he reasons that a little intensive study will be of special value. All this would be true if his class were already thoroly grounded in essentials of literary study, knew the greater periods fairly well, and already appreciated the greater masterpieces. But such could scarcely be the case except with the most advanced undergraduates, or with students of the graduate school.

A third point merits brief consideration, even if we shall not wholly agree as to its status. I approach the criticism with the greater diffidence because it might seem directed against the personnel of our modern language profession. In reality it applies no more to us than to those engaged in many other lines of instruction. The vast improvement resulting from the special training of the modern graduate school can not be too highly appreciated. It is a hopeful sign when it may be said, with any degree of truth, that it is easier to obtain a graduate degree in some foreign universities than in the best of our own graduate schools. Yet it is not enough to rest in this flattering tribute. It is important that the American graduate degree should represent in all respects the highest type reasonably possible. It is most important that the American teacher, whether trained in the graduate school or not, should embody the highest type of scholarly attainment.

Still, with all the improvement in our professional training of the teacher, it is a question whether breadth of culture

has not been frequently sacrificed. The intense specialization of the last quarter century should relieve us of no proper obligations toward other fields than our own. Certainly specialization should never breed contempt for all except a single province of learning. Such contempt for other departments than one's own we are wont to associate, rightly or wrongly, with a certain narrowness of German culture. But whether a phase of German or American specialization, it is unworthy. Admirable as is that narrower intensity which 'steers right onward' thru calm and stormy depths of a single subject, there is no inherent reason why it may not be accompanied by catholicity of taste, breadth of sympathy with other fields, quickness and keenness of observation upon men and nature, and readiness to know something, if it can not be all, of many things.

The criticisms I have suggested in no unfriendly spirit are but to strengthen our purpose to meet a great opportunity. The altered positions of the modern languages and the classics mean, that the burden of culture rests upon us as it has never done before. A new battle of the books has been fought in our time, and the moderns more than share honors with the ancients in our systems of education. The responsibility is great, the opportunity that of a new era. Both call aloud for the highest conceptions of our calling, the highest ideals in our scholastic lives. It is for this reason that I have suggested, not so much in criticism of the past, as for their bearing on the future, these three things. We need a student following which in quality shall fully rank with the serious, high-minded youth who have demanded classical training in the past. We need a thoroughness in critical method which shall forever answer the complaint, that the modern languages do not furnish the same mental training as the classics. We need broad, as

well as specialized culture, that the American teacher of the modern tongues may have the same power and influence in college and community, as has hitherto belonged to his classical colleagues.

But I would not have the semblance of criticism as our last word together. Let me again recur to the hopeful side, as indicated by the extraordinary progress of the last quarter century. Let me again emphasize the splendid results so far accomplished, the splendid position we have thus far gained. Already the fruits of American scholarship are received with flattering attention abroad. On all accounts, we may say 'Our anniversary is one of hope.' How fully this should be apprehended may be clearer, if we recall that we have just past the anniversary of another notable event in the annals of American learning. Scarcely more than seventy years ago, the Concord philosopher emerged from the seclusion of plain living and high thinking which he had deliberately chosen, to enhearten and exalt the American scholar. In that famous address, before our oldest university, he proclaimed a new gospel. 'Our day of dependence,' he said, 'our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close.' That address, that sentiment, has been aptly called the American declaration of intellectual independence. In a sense which the speaker intended only by implication, we may fittingly apply his words to our narrower, tho much loved fields. In a sense which he could have little appreciated in 1837, the modern language scholar of America has past his apprenticeship, has endured his *Wanderjahre*, and may now, without arrogance, claim some degree of mastership in his chosen domain. In a sense, new and far-reaching, the last quarter century has placed the future in our hands. With the modesty of the true learner, with the profound humility and

self-effacement of the truly wise, we may reach out to a fuller grasp of the opportunity so gloriously opening before us. What may not another such period bring to American scholarship? Surely I voice only too feebly your wish, that the American institution of learning may minister even more adequately to the intellectual life of the nation, and that in such ministration the American scholar in the modern languages may bear no unworthy part.